THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) There are nine static and three mobile, laboratories operating in the State of Andhra Pradesh. The State Government have been advised to ensure optimum utilization of the available capacity. However, in case of exigencies, the services of the laboratories situated in neighbouring States like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Orissa can also be utilized, as is being done in other regions.

Tourist Trade Act

1286. SHRI DATTAMEGHE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have asked the State Governments to enact the Tourist Trade Act in a move to protect tourists from being cheated and harassed;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have also asked the State Governments to deploy tourist police at all important tourist destinations to check crime against tourists;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the extent to which the Centre shall bear the expenditure of the State Governments on deployment of tourist police at all tourist destinations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The State Governments of Goa, Daman & Diu, Kerala, J & K and Nagaland have enacted the Tourist Trade Act.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The State/UT Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Goa, Maharashtra, Daman, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, J & K, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi have deployed Tourist Police Force at important tourist centres.

(e) There is no scheme in the Ministry of Tourism for extending Central

financial assistance to the States/UT Governments for deployment of Tourist Police Force.

Bilateral agreements with tourism generating countries

1287. SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR: SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to sign bilateral agreements with some tourism generating countries.

(b) if so, the details thereof and the countries identified for the purpose;

(c) the important features of the proposed agreements; and

(d) the extent to which it is likely to boost the tourism industry in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) Government of India signs bilateral agreements with tourism generating countries from time to time on mutually agreed terms. Thirty eight such bilateral agreements/MoUs have already been signed by Government of India and proposals from Philippines, Malaysia and Oman for signing agreements for cooperation in the field of tourism have been received.

(c) and (d) Bilateral tourism cooperation agreements serves as an instrument for marketing and promoting tourism from a particular market. These agreements facilitate launching of marketing activities, exchange of travel trade delegations, export-import of publicity/promotional material, advertising, exchange of know-how, facilitating investors, human resource development and organising specal promotional events for mutual benefits in the field of tourism.

Financial assistance to yoga kendras

†1288. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.